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# THE INCREASING ROLE OF CAREER GUIDANCE AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURIES (1)

Dr. Bernhard Jenschke

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## Abstract

At the beginning this paper sketches trends of the rapid changes of nearly all life issues, especially in society, work behaviours, labour environment and demands for adjustment under new social values. As main factors which influence worldwide the economic development and the labour market are elaborated the globalization and liberalization process and the labour market aspects of feminization, ageing labour force, migration, unemployment as a global phenomenon and general changes in labour demand by occupations and skill level.

A well-developed and highly qualified career guidance service is seen as one of the most effective instruments in solving these problems which are raised by the described developments. The personal and psychological effects of uncertainty and dislocation of people and the new requirements of the expected qualification standard make career guidance an important cornerstone to cope with these social aspects.

Thus, the nature and structure of guidance and counselling are described under the new challenges. The international co-operation in the guidance sector has accompanied this process in delivering two important documents. The Mission Statement and the Ethical Standards of IAEVG, adopted by the General Assembly of IAEVG in 1995, show in what direction guidance services have to be developed.

## The increasing role of career guidance at the turn of the centuries

Within a general topic "Career Concerns for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" my contribution would like to focus on the Increasing Role of Career Guidance at the turn of the centuries. Nobody can look into the future and can exactly describe in detail how life, society, social and political structure and labour market will really develop in the different regions of the world. As guidance is a social reflection to social environments and life conditions in different societies we can recognize this role when analysing the main influencing factors of social life and economy. That means the actual trends of the economy and the developments of the labour market already influence training and career decisions and have great impacts on the life career development of people in the future. Not only policy makers and planners but also counsellors have to recognize and reflect these tendencies which influence both life of society as a whole and of individuals in a large extent.

If we should express our feelings concerning the future developments there would be a great consensus in stating rapidly continuing changes of nearly all of our life issues, especially the changes in society, work behaviour, labour environment and demands for adjustment under new social values. Changes in the labour market occur parallel with

changes in other social areas.

### **Main factors of change**

In the following I want to describe some of the factors which mainly influence the changes on the labour market as consequences of the technological and social changes. These are globalization and liberalization, privatization, the phenomenon of feminization and an ageing society and also migration processes which all are highlighted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in its World Labour Reports of the last years and also are under special attention of OECD publications.

### **Globalization**

The process of globalization means a bunch of different aspects that forces economy on local, regional and national level to react to the impulses of the world market and international competition challenges. As frontiers and blocks lost their importance economic areas and exchange processes turned into global forms. Globalization essentially means a freer flow of capital in search of cost minimization, the move ability of manufacturing capacity, goods, services and even people. Its consequence is an international competition much more intensive and larger than ever experienced before. Global acting companies look for production locations where they find an excellent infrastructure, the availability of a skilled but not too expensive labour force and a positive enterprise climate of the local administration. The goal of the globalization strategy is a new product in a new location within a new market and with highest profit. The establishment of a worldwide network of locations brings one state a loss of investment and employment accompanied by a win in other regions of the world. This movement and competition result an extreme pressure to increase productivity by taking advantage of technological changes of all kinds, also to cut costs through downsizing workforces. While new technologies changed the nature of work in industry, services, computers, bio-technology and especially in information and communication technologies and led to job loss, new workplaces were created elsewhere. This process requires adaptability and qualification adjustment of workers and enterprises alike. Also the rise of the major three trading areas - the common market of the European Union since 1993, the North American Free Trade Agreement including Mexico since 1994 and the special group of South East Asia highly industrialized countries in this region of the world - influenced the globalization of economic processes towards a worldwide system of financial, commercial and economic interactions.

### **Liberalization**

Liberalization is another major trend in the economic development in many regions -

especially in countries outside the industrialized OECD area. Liberalization means the introduction and enhancement of more market behaviour and competition in the national economy. Privatization is one of the characteristic signs of this development. It is seen, for instance by ILO as one of the most dramatic aspects of economic reforms. Worldwide, more than 100 million people are employed in state enterprises. Many of them have been in the process of privatization. For policy makers and employers there are two main expected gains: to reduce the public expenses and therefore the budget deficits and a hope of better economic efficiency- that means better products and services at lower costs. In the former centrally planned economies in Eastern Europe privatization was very often the first step to create competition and to force free market behaviour.

If privatization occurs it is generally criticized not only by the trade unions because of the erosion of job security and possible negative impacts on employment.

The privatization has increased dramatically over the last decade, particularly in the developing countries.

When governments undertake such privatization campaigns, they are often not sure how to deal with the immense social consequences. Besides an urgent need for labour market measures to assist people to cope with problems caused by privatization also counselling and guidance have to contribute in job-search, mobility assistance, vocational training and retraining, looking for job creation schemes or promoting of entrepreneurship and self-employment. There is no doubt that also at an early stage of initiating and implementing a privatization program essential employee's concerns have to be addressed.

### **Labour market trends**

If we ask for the future role of career guidance we have to look also at the labour market trends.

There are two key elements which define the labour force: the population and the participation rate. The available population is a result of demographic trends (fertility and mortality) and of migration processes (immigration and emigration). The participation rates indicate the proportion of work active people differentiated by gender (especially more women participate in the labour force), age (how many young and older people are participating) and maybe marital status and nationality. Every labour force forecast has to include the projection of population development and an estimation of the participation rates.

### **Feminization**

A major employment trend is what ILO calls the "feminization" of the labour force. That means that more and more women have been joining the labour force but in different regions of the world for different reasons: in Africa and Latin America many more urban

women are taking part in the mainly informal employment sector to ensure family survival.

In the dynamic Asian countries labour shortages draw more women with often higher standards of education into the labour force. Women's participation rates have been rising steadily in the industrialized market economies over the last 20 years with the result of an actual female percentage of half or more of the total labour force. This development is usually accompanied by a rise of the service sector and part-time employment, both of which entail a higher proportion of women workers. For guidance and counselling it is more and more meaningful to consider women as a special target group in all aspects of education, training, further training, employment and qualification adjustment.

### **Ageing labour force**

Another very serious development is the fact that the world's population as a whole is ageing faster as it is growing. Normally population ageing can be seen as a sign of prosperity and well-developed health care and of great social achievement. In industrial societies more than a quarter of the population will be over 60 years by the beginning of the next century. That means that the labour force is in a large measure depending on the activity rate of the older people. Just the negative development in the labour force participation of older men has alarmed most of the analysts and more and more also the policy makers. In Western Europe it was estimated that if the low level of economic activity of older persons persists, by 2025 there may be as few as 1.5 active persons for each ageing dependant.

Among other reasons this development is a result of the wrong personnel policy of companies or public administrations to push older persons out of the labour force whenever possible. Older workers - often seen as more expensive and less productive than younger persons - are then the first victims of enterprise restructuring. In some cases of job shortages special early retirement schemes should relieve the labour market. But also other alarming reasons as poor health or disability, particularly of blue-collar workers, led to early retirement. Many politicians fear an inter-generation conflict with dramatic consequences if we do not turn this development into the right direction of a higher activity rate of older persons. If we would look more at the positive side of the coin societies and economies could easily benefit from the accumulated experience and skills of older workers which could be used for the adaptation of the younger unexperienced workers and this leads to a better usage of human resources. At the same time we could reduce the high cost of social spending for pensions and other social benefits.

Forecasts indicate that the demographic pressure on social expenditures connecting to the ageing society will begin to increase during the first decade of next century when the "baby boom" generation reaches retirement age.

Promoting flexibility in retirement as the necessary policy should become a key obligation

of employment and vocational guidance services. Counselling has to be addressed both to the employers and older persons still in or already out of their work activity. Counselling issues could be work place conditions, health concerns. In this aspect analysis of job demands and possibilities can reduce job burdens through job redesign, training for adaptation, time management, advise for using flexible options in general. Also consultancy for employers can help to identify jobs suitable for older persons and to make the best use of older workers human capital in achieving an optimal transfer of skills to the younger work force.

## **Migration**

Migration processes are another important element which influences the labour market nationally and internationally. In the European Union we now have free movement of labour for all member states.

Migration streams are strongly determined by different levels of income between the home country and the immigration country. The pressure to migrate for economic reasons is low between countries of similar levels of development. Also a labour shortage in specific levels of qualifications can cause migration streams as it was more than twenty years ago when the demand for workers on low qualified jobs was met with the big influx of unskilled or semi-skilled migrant workers from outside the European Union - as from Turkey in the case of Germany. This kind of immigration from less developed countries tends to become a selfgrowing effect which is also called "self-feeding immigration". Foreign workers take on jobs that are less attractive for national workers. Later those move on into more desirable job areas and leave the field to the migrant workers making them more indispensable. Another aspect of the self-feeding process is that foreign workers tend to fetch their families, friends and acquaintances to the country. With the opening of the borders of the Central and Eastern European countries in the early nineties it began a still larger migration pressure from these states to Western Europe.

More migration takes place because regional economic areas near borders will grow together. Workers in border areas are particularly fast to changes in the neighbouring country. But "commuting" which often occurs in these regions obviously does not bring so many problems for workers as real migration.

Also temporary immigration of labour as it is a current phenomenon in the EU of so-called contract workers from outside EU countries is more and more usual and has great labour market effects.

Migration with its different facets of appearance is in large measure an increasing factor which influences the labour market and the social conditions the more the process of globalization and internationalization continue to remain. Internationally acting companies

prefer more and more highly qualified experts, that means linguistically, technically and culturally flexible and regional mobile professionals. Because of this increasing importance of the mobility of labour for individuals and societies there is also a great need for consideration within guidance and counselling offers. A precondition for a better handling of migration problems is to accompany these processes with all necessary information and assistance. Vocational guidance can help workers to know about job opportunities in other countries but also they have to be informed on constraints of migration as work permits, residence problems, recognition of qualification, cultural differences, living and housing conditions, educational and language requirements. Before, during and after migration processes there is a permanent need for guidance and counselling in a multi-cultural quality.

### **Unemployment as a global phenomenon**

After the elaboration of some very important - mostly interdependent aspects - of labour market developments we should turn our attention to the phenomenon which is in many respects a consequence of the above-described processes.

According the figures of ILO in the middle of the nineties about 30 percent of the world's labour force - 820 million people - were unemployed or underemployed. 120 million are registered as unemployed and there are 700 million workers who are underemployed with an income which does not reach a minimum standard of living. The International Labour Organization stated this situation as the worst unemployment development since the Great Depression of 1930s and calls it a "global crisis" which worsened in the last years. The increasing level of unemployment is accompanied by stagnation or falling wages and a shift towards informal or part-time jobs. Normally, economic output and employment are closely linked - and in the last years world economy grew only slowly with a wide diversity. Thus, we have only a "jobless growth".

It cannot be expected that a moderate economic growth reduces unemployment. Output growth is often caused by labour productivity which also reduces the number of jobs. At the same time the global labour force is permanently expanding (annually with estimated 43 million people) as a reflection both of growing population and increasing participation rates.

Another significant global trend of labour absorption is the move towards informal employment - especially in Africa and Latin America - and more and more enterprises are using sub-contractors or temporary or part-time labour. Informal work includes domestic staff, the self-employed, unpaid family workers and those in micro-enterprises.

Impacts of the increase of participation rates are the high urbanization and the growth of the informal sector because jobs have been created only in low-productivity occupations

and mostly in the service sector. Unemployment is still growing in most of the regions of the world.

For the future development over the next decade labour perspectives show a very similar picture also in industrialized market economies.

The main findings of labour force projections for the OECD countries which indicate the possible size and age structure of the future OECD labour force up to 2005 are that the labour force continues to grow in the large majority of countries, with only modest decline in a few. The structure of the labour force is projected to change, with women making up a larger share and a higher proportion of adults being 45 or over within the labour force - thus, the picture of the OECD regions shows exactly the same directions as the global trends are going.

### **General changes in labour demand by occupations and skill level**

Concerning the occupational change future employment growth is projected to be the strongest for professional and technical, and administration and managerial occupations. Under a general view, the pattern of occupational change can be characterized as providing favourable job opportunities for those with post-secondary education or high-level skills and a loss of jobs for poor skilled workers. This causes a need for an increasing proportion of the labour force to undergo retraining and further training.

Technological and organizational change in manufacturing called for increasing levels of literacy and numeracy, while the changes in services required greater skills in using computers and in understanding abstract principles. In addition, the future demand for labour will grow faster in sectors which are more intensive in knowledge and skills.

The development in information technology will influence the technological change as one of the most important factors. Research into the impact of new automated technologies on skill requirements strongly supported the view that "complexity, responsibility, abstractness, and interdependence have risen in most occupations" (Hirschhorn, 1984). These skills characterize the march into the information society.

This survey of labour market trends and unemployment shows that mainly economic growth, sectoral, and occupational shifts and policy changes determine the labour demand whereas demographic trends, migration and urbanization and labour force participation influence the supply of labour. In most of the world's regions supply and demand are unbalanced because of an actual job loss as consequence of the technological development on the one hand and a continuing expansion of the supply with an estimation of over 43 million new job seekers annually on the other hand.

Before I turn to the role of guidance in this concern I would like to draw a scenario which is also under consideration of serious researchers and can be found in papers published by



OECD experts:

In a future that is not so far capital will become more and more limited, interests will increase so much that it makes no longer any economic sense to increase productivity because of no more economic profit. At the same time the declining natural resources become more and more expensive and lots of better trained people push into the labour market. The paradigm of yesterday low cost - low skill is reversing into high skill - low cost. If capital and resources are no longer sufficiently available maybe the only meaningful solution will be more employment. A change of social values and a new view of economy specially under ecological aspects could form new attitudes and behaviour toward natural life resources and human labour. And this more ecological understanding would request a new concept of counselling which considers environmental impacts of career choices and how to reflect on the problem of jobless growth. In this respect Peter Plant called for a "green guidance" model.

Despite this more visionary scenario now I would like to summarize some recommendations for more employment which refer to proposals of international organisations which are already cited and deal with labour problems:

### **Recommendations for more employment**

In all recommendations of international bodies active labour market instruments rank very high in the ladder of efforts which are recommended to facilitate the integration or reintegration of persons into the labour market.

What are active measures in this concern:

1. *Vocational training* at all levels and further training and retraining schemes play the main role in active policies. The importance of the initial training at the beginning of working life is evident.

Besides the initial training of young people *further training* of adults is more and more an important factor of competitiveness. The European Commission stated that further training is an undeniable investment in human resources from which the economy profits in any case (Schmid, 1994).

In Germany for instance further training has been one of the most important measures of an active labour market policy. Further training - mostly paid by German companies but also for unemployed paid by the labour offices - became a central and vital factor of innovation and productivity in Germany. The increasing need of and participation in such further training programs has to be seen in relation to a number of interdependent trends of social and structural developments, especially

- Structural changes of the labour force supply, e.g. through increasing portion of older working people, the higher participation rate of women and the expanding numbers of

immigrants;

- New requirements for the qualification of workers which derive from the technological change and new comprehensive forms of labour organisation. These new requirements are more complex qualifications as thinking in relationship, communication and co-operation skills, time management and sense of responsibility.
  - The impacts of unemployment with an increasing portion of long-term unemployed.
2. Further on, all kind of grants for the integration of unemployed workers in terms of *wage subsidies*, tax relief and reduction of social contributions lead to a higher willingness of employers to hire unemployed.
  3. *Job creation measures* which also include support for newly created and/or partly financed workplaces in the first labour market. In Germany we introduced such a kind of job creation through paying money in the amount of the unemployment benefit to private or public employers if they employ an unemployed in a new job in environmental work, in youth care or social services. Here we combine structural change with employment creation. Besides the direct reduction of unemployment both facilities lead additionally to indirect effects in increasing a great number of jobs in supplying branches which serve and complement the new created workplaces.
  4. Granting aid in the amount of unemployment benefits for starting a business to *further self employment* plays a more and more important role as an active instrument.

According to the result of international studies and responding to the recommendations of OECD and EU a well-developed *labour market and employment service* with placement, guidance and counselling functions and training and further training provisions is a fundamental precondition for a better fight against unemployment. OECD confirmed in its reports that this positive impact of good services is also found by international comparisons. If countries expand and intensify their employment services including guidance and counselling for the implementation of active schemes they have better results of keeping unemployment under control.

The establishment of employment and guidance services was also essential for the success of the transition process in Middle and Eastern Europe. Therefore the supporting Western countries and the World Bank invested much money in helping these countries setting up labour services including information, guidance, counselling and placement.

### **The role of guidance and counselling**

The changes of economy and labour market were described above mainly in their enormous quantitative dimensions and with their social and economic impacts. I only want to mention the serious personal and psychological effects of unemployment which are certainly to

consider under guidance relations.

Under consideration of the described world-wide problems on the labour market the importance of adequate guidance for an optimal career development with a qualified training of the labour force and the subsequent development of appropriate services is a recurrent theme in all countries.

All relevant international organizations and most of the industrialized countries have emphasized the need for guidance and counselling in transition to and during the whole stages of working life.

These stages are in main concerns the following:

- During general education whenever choices of subjects, courses or specialisation are under consideration;
- In the school to work transition process;
- Throughout the whole working life for adjustment to new requirements, in need for further training or job change, in case of unemployment, job search or retraining;
- Guidance has more and more to focus on the problems of ageing people and on the special needs of women as an increasing factor in the labour force. Together with the counselling of migrants in a multicultural society these new tasks will obtain the same important meaning in counselling systems in the beginning of the next century as it was the transition process from school to work in the last two decades.

In this framework, vocational guidance plays directly and indirectly an essential part in the advancement of human resources in general and a satisfying balance of supply and demand of qualifications:

- By an increased orientation towards active life and work implementing the requirements of the world of work into the curriculum of schools;
- By providing basic information about careers and training and retraining opportunities on local, regional and national level;
- By motivating for processes of learning on self and opportunities, thus improving the quality of the individual career decision and the necessary permanent adjustment of qualification;
- By helping disadvantaged groups for better participation in training and job chances and self-actualization activities;
- By overcoming fears and antagonisms of technological change and by developing favourable attitudes towards careers with future chances.

Guidance and counselling is not able to create new jobs or to achieve that economic and technological change does not cause unemployment with its enormous personal problems. It cannot abolish job loss and financial cutbacks. But it can prepare clients to

cope with these increasing difficulties in informing on options, in opening alternatives and available further training opportunities and preparing the unemployed with job search strategies. Thus, it can bring about hope and new employment chances.

As Tony Watts and others have emphasized, guidance offers substantial economic and social benefits also in reducing drop-outs from education and training and through avoiding mismatches between job requirements and individual competencies and motivations. Guidance can also help individuals to adjust to the rapid changes in technology and in production system with resulting disruptions and needs for retraining.

From the economic standpoint optimum use of vocational guidance would help to make the best of human resources through timely information on the labour market and on the skills required. But forecasts which link training and employment in a mechanical and rigid way are obviously limited just as training needs cannot be deduced directly from employment forecasts. Key qualifications become more and more important. Vocational guidance can provide an interface between the individual and the labour market and the initial or continuing training systems.

In Europe for instance, the European Commission took some important initiatives so that vocational guidance services become an integral part of the education and training policies and contribute essentially to the success of the economic policies.

Therefore, under consideration of this example the establishment, development and improvement of vocational guidance services in all countries - regardless of their developmental stage - is crucial for social and economic welfare.

The nature of guidance should imply the following *principles*:

- To focus on the individual and further his self-realization and development;
- To help individuals achieve their full potential and at the same time meet manpower demands of economy;
- To be open and available free of charge to all persons, youth and adults, regardless of race, religion, political opinions or membership in a trade-union.

The work of guidance should comprise the following *objectives*:

- To help clients cope with whatever personal, educational and vocational problems they encounter;
- To improve the career decision-making by helping clients find out their abilities, interests and opportunities and by providing information about careers and related training opportunities and their requirements;
- To undertake special efforts on behalf of underprivileged groups in order to help them to their rights and opportunities (advocating);
- To develop the full potential of individuals as a contribution of human resource

development;

- To facilitate mobility within the educational system and the labour market;
- To prevent and counteract unemployment problems with the aid of employment counselling acquiring job search skills and providing information on further training and retraining of adults (Ed Herr - 1994 - called the role of counsellors in this concern being "brokers of training and retraining opportunities");
- To cooperate closely with all institutions relevant to guidance work like schools, labour offices, institutions of technical and vocational training, private and public enterprises, research institutes and social agencies.

Focusing the social changes and meeting the challenges of the information society guidance and counselling needs to develop a *new type of counsellor* who combines under consideration of the above principles the following roles and professional behaviours

- *respecting* clients needs and *being developmental* in enhancing peoples potentials
- *activating* the persons in their self-developmental processes
- *advocating* for people with special needs and social disadvantages
- *managing the information* flood in selecting, applying and valuing it to clients' needs
- *networking* with all adequate professionals and services to seek the best assistance for the client.

Under consideration of the principles and objectives and the new role of counsellors the following common trends can be seen how guidance is to develop:

- Guidance is seen as a *continuous process*, which should start early in schools and continue to the period of transition to adult life and should be accessible throughout working life or unemployment periods.
- Guidance uses a *variety of methods* from systematic programs to one-to-one interview or group work, use of computers and other media and gives more attention to all kinds of activating measures including self-information and self placement facilities and cooperation with other institutions and networking with involved persons and opportunity providers.
- Guidance process involves the *individual more as an active agent*, rather than a passive recipient. Applying this philosophy guidance services should be structured and work as service in the ideal sense of *serving to persons* for whom they have to care and take responsibility and thus they may better approach the real need of their users.

As labour market and career problems became global in its dimensions guidance as assistance in personal, social, educational and vocational development should be a

vital motor for future international cooperation in solving these problems.

### **International cooperation in the guidance field**

The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) promotes all guidance activities which aim on personal, social, educational and career development including development of self-understanding, relating to others, cooperation skills, planning and implementing career plans and alternatives, lifelong integration into society and labour. In this sense it declared in its *Mission Statement*, adopted by the General Assembly 1995 in Sweden, the main aims of guidance.

Also in 1995 the General Assembly of IAEVG adopted the *Ethical Standards* to provide a public code of ethics to guide the practitioners in their activities and to advise governmental agencies about expected standards of professional practice and behavior. This document refers to

- the responsibilities to clients as respecting their dignity and individual right to make own independent choices, in supporting their self-development and providing them equal opportunities regardless gender, social status, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation or disability
- the attitudes to colleagues and professional associates for establishing cooperative relationship
- the attitudes to governments in advocating for ethically rendered services
- and finally to responsibilities to research and related processes and also as an individual practitioner.

I believe that with both documents IAEVG has set up high qualified guidelines which can improve guidance and counselling to a large extent.

And everybody who reflects these standards and feels committed to its principles is called to contribute to their development by refining them through practical experience.

I conclude with the hope that I could draw the attention to the main influencing factors of the future developments and to new needs and approaches of guidance and counselling in order to cope with the problems at the end of this decade and to be better prepared for the new requirements in work and society.

### **Notes**

1. This paper was presented as a keynote at the ARAVEG 1997 Asian Conference on Vocational and Educational Guidance, Taipei, Taiwan, 27-29, Nov. 1997.

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